

## REPORT OF THE SMALL WORKING GROUP ON MEETING FREQUENCY

At the Finance and Administration Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2011 there was widespread support for moving to biennial Commission meetings (i.e. meetings held every two years). The Chair of the F&A Committee requested the formation of a small group comprising Brazil, Denmark, Germany, Japan and USA so as to prepare a series of actions to enable the Commission to meet every two years from 2012 onwards. This group met on 9<sup>th</sup> July and made the following suggestions and recommendations:

- 1 The group recognised and **endorsed** the universal support for continuing with annual meetings of the Scientific Committee.
- 2 In discussing which other subsidiary bodies should continue to meet annually the group **recommended** that WKM&AWI, INF, ASW, F&A, BSC and CC should be considered as equals, and should be afforded equal priorities. Recognising that only some countries favoured the CC continuing to meet on an annual basis, the group suggested the following options for preserving the equality between subsidiary bodies:
  - a. Either all of the current subsidiary bodies (INF, ASW, WKM&AWI, CC, BSC, F&A) should continue to meet annually, or
  - b. None of these subsidiary bodies should meet annually

Recognising that these options may not be preferable, the group also made two further proposals:

- c. The time allotted to the CC could be doubled by planning to meet for twice the current length of time every second year. This would have the effect of allowing the Committee to take on more business, but still preserve the equality between subsidiary bodies
  - d. Alternatively the group suggested that the Conservation Committee (and any other group as desired) could meet on an annual basis so long as the costs of the extra annual Conservation Committee meeting were entirely borne by a host government.
- 3 The group **recommended** that a Standing Committee be established to guide the implementation and delivery of the Commission's work during the two year intersessional period. They proposed that a drafting group be set up at IWC/63 to present proposals on its terms of reference, membership etc to IWC/64 on how to constitute the Standing Committee. As an initial proposal the members present offered to form the basis of the drafting group and invited further Contracting Governments to join if they wish. The group agreed that the Standing Committee, if established, would take the place of the current Advisory Committee.

The group agreed to work by email and would base their suggestions for an IWC Standing Committee on the operations and memberships of other Standing Committees which support comparable organisations (e.g. ICES). They considered that the membership of the Standing Committee should include representative(s) from each of the major groups present at IWC (e.g. Buenos Aires Group, European Union, developing countries, indigenous whaling nations, whaling nations etc). The group expected that the membership of the standing committee would number around ten countries.
- 4 The group **recommended** that the Commission should ask the Secretary to review and suggest all the changes to the Commission's rules and procedures that would be required for the Commission to change to a two yearly meeting cycle. This should be presented to IWC/64 as a clear statement of how the rules would be changed, and should include as a minimum changes to the Chair's, Vice-Chair's and Secretary's length of service. This would include options based around either two or four years, with the group favouring a four year term so as to allow incumbents to preside over two annual meetings.
- 5 The group recognised that Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling quotas would have to be set for an even number of years rather than the current five. Accordingly the group **recommended** that the Commission approach the Scientific Committee for advice on the safety of setting strike limits for a range of even numbers of years (i.e. for four, six, eight or ten year blocks). This request should be passed to the Chair of the Scientific Committee at IWC/63 so as to allow the Scientific Committee to report on the safety of strike limits set for these terms at IWC/64 in 2012.

- 6 The group **recommended** that the BSC should set budgets for 2 years, and also **recommended** that invoices should continue to be prepared annually.
- 7 The group **recommended** that the Scientific Committee be asked to prepare a research programme and budget for two years in advance, which may be modified on an annual basis in accordance with the latest research needs/priorities identified by the Committee. It further **recommended** that one of the duties of the Standing Committee in the years in which the Commission meeting is not held should be to endorse the Committee's research programme and budget, and have the power to modify the Commission's research budget by up to, for example, 5% of the total cost. This may result in a small rise or fall in Contracting Governments financial contributions. In relation to these points, the group noted that another issue to be considered would be how the report of the Scientific Committee, including its recommendations, should be handled (probably) by the Standing Committee in such years.
- 8 In regard to the financial saving which would be realised by reducing the meeting frequency the group **recommended** that these should be divided equally between the host government and the Commission. This would be achieved by estimating the cost of holding a 2 week Commission meeting (using figures supplied in IWC/63/F&A 6) and dividing this saving into two.
- This action would mean that in years where no country offered to host either the Scientific Committee or the Commission meetings that the length of the meetings would have to be reduced so as to fit the reduced Commission budget.
- 9 The group also **recommended** that the working group should explore and make recommendations on any further currently unforeseen issues which may arise in moving to biennial meetings.

Abbreviations:

WKM&AWI:	Whale Killing Methods and Associated Welfare Issues Working Group
INF:	Infractions Sub-Committee
ASW:	Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Sub-Committee
F&A:	Finance and Administration Committee
BSC:	Budgetary Sub-Committee
CC:	Conservation Committee